

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A blood pump for percutaneous introduction into a patient, comprising:
a pump housing with an internally disposed rotor, wherein each of said pump housing and said rotor are capable of being disposed in a first state of generally reduced dimension during introduction to a pumping site and expanded from said first state to a second state of generally increased dimension to perform pumping.
2. The blood pump of claim 1 and further, wherein said rotor includes a plurality of struts capable of being deformed such that said rotor can be disposed in said first state and expanded to said second state.
3. The blood pump of claim 2 and further, wherein said pump housing includes an elastomeric sheath capable of being deformed such that said elastomeric sheath can be disposed in said first state and expanded to said second state.
4. The blood pump of claim 3 and further, wherein said pump housing includes a plurality of struts coupled to said elastomeric sheath and capable of being deformed such that said elastomeric sheath can be disposed in said first state and expanded to said second state.
5. The blood pump of claim 4 and further, wherein at least one of said plurality of struts is constructed from nitinol.
6. The blood pump of claim 1 and further, wherein said pump housing includes at least one fluid inlet and at least one fluid outlet, and including an outflow cannula communicatively coupled to said fluid outlet.
7. The blood pump of claim 6 and further, wherein said cannula is dimensioned to extend through a valve within the patient's heart.

8. The blood pump of claim 1 and further, wherein said rotor includes a plurality of blades hingedly connected to a rotor hub.

9. The blood pump of claim 8 and further, wherein said blades can be selectively positioned such that said rotor is disposed in said first state and thereafter manipulated such that said blades hingedly rotate such that said rotor assumes said second state.

10. The blood pump of claim 9 and further, wherein said rotor includes a pin to restrict the ability of the blades to hingedly rotate away from said rotor hub.

11. The blood pump of claim 1 and further, including a rotor shaft and wherein said cannula extends generally over said rotor shaft.

12. The blood pump of claim 1 and further, wherein said rotor operates in a generally centrifugal fashion.

13. The blood pump of claim 1 and further, wherein said rotor operates in a generally axial fashion.

14. The blood pump of claim 1 and further, including a balloon capable of being selective inflated to anchor said pump housing within at least one of the patient's heart and the patient's vasculature.

15. The blood pump of claim 2 and further, wherein each of said strut members of said rotor include at least two strut elements hingedly coupled together.